

# A Dirty, Sticky Situation

## Mini-inquiry project

Note to reader! This is a guided inquiry project. Feel free to use it as a guide, possible suggestions, or a step-by-step process to begin to answer your essential question.

Did you know your culture and class will influence the way you live your life, your opinions, your beliefs, and what is important to you? It's true! People from different cultures and classes can look at something and have two different ways of thinking about it and understanding it.

In this mini-inquiry project, you will be working for the Minister of the Environment for the Government of Canada. They need to make a decision about the Alberta Tar Sands. There is a lot of information out there about the Tar Sands but you need to make the right decision for all— even those without a voice.

Essential Question:

Are we at risk from making a bad decision regarding the Alberta Tar Sands? How do we know if an environmental plan is just?

When we keep the big ideas in mind, we learn to uncover them!

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### **Immerse** (wonder and ask questions)

This first activity will help activate your background knowledge. From this activity, we hope to prompt many thoughts and, most importantly, lots of questions that will push our inquiry further! Take a look at the pictures included in your envelopes. Write down your thoughts and ideas about the images on post-its and add them to the sheets. Eventually, you will feel as if you have unpacked the images. Make sure you take the time to talk to your partners about your thoughts and questions. Please find a place to post your completed pages in the LRC.

What questions and wonderings do you have about the Alberta Tar Sands? What information will you use to inform your decision?

### **Investigate** (develop questions, search for and develop answers)

#### Building Knowledge

Watch this video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjxAGNsCNW0> Use the fishbone graphic organizer to record the big ideas from the news report.

Time to do some research. Use the research legend in your envelope as a guide to chart your thinking during your reading. Write all over the document! The more you include in notes, comments, and symbols, the more you interact with the ideas, and the better you will be able to use this information later!

Read any of these texts that you find may be useful to support your research:

- 1) <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/Blog/the-numbers-speak-for-themselves/blog/33478>
- 2) <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/campaigns/tarsands/>
- 3) <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/recent/tarsandsfaq/>
- 4) <http://www.energy.alberta.ca/OurBusiness/oilsands.asp>
- 5) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oil\\_sands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oil_sands)
- 6) <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/story/2009/02/17/edm-advertisement.html>

Now that you have viewed a news report and read a few articles, what is at the centre of the Tar Sands issue?

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**Coalesce** (synthesize key ideas and build knowledge)

Demonstrating Understanding

Use the compare and contrast chart to record the information that supports the for and against positions regarding the Alberta Tar Sands referring back to your video notes, notes and symbols from the texts you read. Carefully look it over and discuss these informations as a group working in the Ministry of the Environment.

**Don't forget!** As employees of the Minsitry of the Environment, it's your job to protect Canadians and the environment. Make sure you support Health Canada's position that a clean environment is key to maintaining and improving the health of Canadians.

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**Go Public** (demonstrate understanding and share learning)

Time to Make Your Decision Public

You made important discoveries about the Alberta Tar Sands and explored how you would know if an environmental plan is just. It's time to make a decision. Because your decision is a big deal for people everywhere inside and outside of Canada, you will need to consider a big-picture reality when you decide. Make sure you refer back to your video notes, notes and symbols from the texts you read, and t-chart. What will you do and how will you communicate it to the world?

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### Curricular Outcomes:

#### ELA

##### Outcome AR

Reflect on and assess their viewing, listening, reading, speaking, writing, and other representing experiences and strategies by participating in discussions and relating work to a set of criteria (e.g., "What did I learn?").

##### Outcome CR

Comprehend and respond to a variety of grade-level texts (including contemporary and traditional visual, oral, written, and multimedia) that address: identity (e.g., Just Watch Me) community (e.g., People and Places) social responsibility (e.g., Friendship) and make connections to prior learning and experiences.

##### Outcome CC

Compose and create a range of visual, multimedia, oral, and written texts that explore: identity (e.g., My Family and Friends) community (e.g., Our Community) social responsibility (e.g., TV Ads for Children) and make connections to own life.

#### Social Studies

Develop an understanding of the significance of land on the evolution of Canadian identity.

- Examine the influence of the land on the Canadian personality depicted in literary texts, songs, media presentations, visual art and dance, sport and recreation.
- Analyze the relationship between the traditional Aboriginal concept of land (an animate being; the source of life) and the contemporary Western European notion of land (a resource to be owned and exploited) through the centuries.
- Investigate the importance of the land in the Canadian economy (e.g., agriculture, trapping, hydroelectricity, fishing, mining, forestry, tourism), and speculate about the impact on the identity of Canadians.
- Investigate the impact of land on the identity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

Slavery and Child Labor from : Collaboration & Comprehension (1998) Page 176 ws the source of inspiration for A Dirty, Sticky Situation— Mini-inquiry project

Comprehension and Collaboration: Inquiry Circles in Action (Harvey and Daniels, 2009, p. 144).

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